

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT RABAT 3412 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ALGIERS
DAKAR CASABLANCE MADRID NOUAKCHOTT PARIS THE HAGUE TRIPOLI
TUNIS USUN JUL 14

QUOTE

S E C R E T RABAT 3412

EXDIS

DEPT. PLS. PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY;

DEPT. PLS. PASS DEPSECDEF CLEMENTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP AG US

SUBJ: SPANISH SAHARA: U.S. DIPLOMATIC ROLE

REF: A. SECTO 60041; B. MADRID 4839

1. SUMMARY: IT IS MY CONSIDERED OPINION THAT PROPOSAL TO
HOLD A FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE, WHETHER IT COMES FROM THE UN OR
ELSEWHERE, HAS NOW BEEN OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS AND WILL BE EITHER
REJECTED OR IGNORED, ESPECIALLY BY MOROCCO, AND PROBABLY
ALSO BY OTHERS. MOROCCO'S SAHARA DIPLOMACY, PREVIOUSLY
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BOLSTERED BY UNDERSTANDING WITH MAURITANIA, HAS GAINED MAJOR
NEW MOMENTUM WITH ALGERIAN RAPPROCHEMENT. MOROCCANS AT
THIS STAGE ARE INTENT ON CONVINCING SPAIN OF ADVANTAGES OF
ENTERING BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS, WHILE WARNING THAT TIME FOR

DEAL WITH MADRID MAY SOON RUN OUT.

2. IN MY JUDGMENT, TIME HAS COME FOR URGENT U.S. POLICY DECISION AS TO WHETHER OUR INTERESTS WOULD BE BETTER SERVED BY MORE ACTIVE, ALTHOUGH DISCREET U.S. DIPLOMATIC ROLE. I.S. AIM COULD BE TO HELP RECONCILE SPANISH AND MOROCCAN APPROACHES, INASMUCH AS TWO SIDES SHARE MUCH COMMON GROUND BUT APPEAR CAUGHT IN IMPASSE. IF WE DO NOT ACT IN TIMELY FASHION, POTENTIAL BENEFITS WITH BOTH SIDES WILL SLIP BY AND POSSIBILITY OF MISSTEP BY SPAIN OR MOROCCO INCREASE. FOLLOWING IS MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS PLUS RECOMMENDATION FOR POSSIBLE NEW POLICY APPROACH. END SUMMARY.

3. ACCORD WITH ALGERIA: AS REFLECTED REFTTEL A, MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RAPPROCHEMENT HAS FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR OUTCOME OF SAHARA MANEUVERING. SPANISH DOUBTS (MADRID 4839) NOTWITHSTANDING, KING CLEARLY FEELS HE HAS A SOLID AGREEMENT WITH ALGERIA. OTHER EVIDENCE, SUCH AS REPORTED RABAT 3249, IS REINFORCED BY KING'S COMMENTS TO DEPSECDEF CLEMENTS AND ME DURING BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS IN MARRAKECH JULY 10 AND 11. (DETAILS OF TALKS WITH KING BEING REPORTED BY DEPSECDEF'S PARTY, BUT CERTAIN ASPECTS BEAR HIGHLIGHTING IN CONTEXT THIS ANALYSIS.)

4. KING JULY 11 SPECIFICALLY CITED THREE PRINCIPAL POINTS COVERED BY AGREEMENT WITH ALGERIA:
(A) NO ALGERIAN TROOPS WILL CROSS BORDER WHEN MOROCCO MOVES INTO SAHARA; (B) THERE WILL "NEVER AGAIN" BE REPETITION OF 1963 FIGHTING OVER BORDER DEMARCATION, AS ARABS MUST FACE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM UNITED; AND (C) ALGERIA HAS NO TERRITORIAL CLAIMS ON SAHARA -- BOUTEFLIKA SWORE ON KORAN THAT ALGERIA AND BOUMEDIENE REALLY MEANT IT, KING RELATED. AS FOR ALGERIA'S ICJ PRESENTATION, SCHEDULED TO START THIS WEEK IN THE HAGUE, THAT WAS "SETTLED," KING ASSERTED. KING WENT ON TO EMPHASIZE INEVITABILITY OF SPANISH DEPARTURE, ADDING THERE WOULD BE NO WAR BETWEEN MOROCCO AND SPAIN, "BECAUSE SPANIARDS ARE STRONGER;" IF SPAIN DID NOT GET OUT, HOWEVER, THERE WOULD BE INCREASED
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"SUBVERSION" (AN AREA IN WHICH KING CONSIDERS HIS COUNTRYMEN HAVE CONSIDERABLE EXPERTISE.) U.S., HE AGAIN STRESSED, CAN HELP GET SPAIN OUT OF SAHARA.

5. CURRENT MOROCCAN FOCUS ON SPAIN: IN WAKE OF BREAKTHROUGH WITH ALGERIA, MOROCCANS NOW FOCUSING HEAVILY ON TRYING TO CONVINCE SPAIN OF ADVANTAGES OF ENTERING BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS. AS KING INDICATED TO ME JULY 10, HE STILL OFFERING BILATERAL DEAL ON SPANISH STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS, BUT IS TIGHTENING SCREWS AND SEES SUCH DEAL AS BEING RAPIDLY OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS (RABAT 3360). IN MY VIEW, CURRENT OFFERS PROBABLY WILL NOT BE AS GENEROUS AS THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN A FEW MONTHS AGO, BUT ARE CERTAINLY MORE SO THAN THEY WILL BE

A FEW MONTHS FROM NOW. MOROCCAN PUBLIC POSITION ALONG ABOVE LINES WAS EXPRESSED IN AUTHORITATIVE EDITORIAL WRITTEN BY AHMED ALAOUI, COUSIN OF KING, IN SEMI-OFFICIAL LE MATIN JULY 12. NOTING RECENT EVOLUTION IN SPANISH PRESS TOWARD SUPPORT FOR IDEA OF BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOROCCO, EDITORIAL UNDERLINED THAT MOROCCO IS THE ONLY NEGOTIATING PARTNER CAPABLE OF GUARANTEEING FAVORABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SPANISH WITHDRAWAL. IF CURRENT PROCESS CAME TO ITS CONCLUSION DESPITE SPAIN, HOWEVER, THERE WOULD BE NO MOROCCAN CONCESSIONS, EDITORIAL WARNED, BUT IT STILL NOT TOO LATE TO BEGIN DIRECT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AND ANY PROCEDURE (I.E. AT ICJ AND UN) CAN BE INTERRUPTED. NEXT MOVE UP TO MADRID, EDITORIAL CONCLUDED. (MOROCCANS ARE UNDOUBTEDLY MAKING SAME PITCH TO SPANIARDS THROUGH VARIOUS OTHER CHANNELS. AS A POSSIBLE EXAMPLE, I SAW KING TAKE SPANISH AMB ASIDE FOR SHORT BUT EARNEST CHAT DURING MARRAKECH PROCEEDINGS.)

6. SPANISH INITIATIVE ON FOUR-POWER SAHARA TALKS: WE NOTE MOROCCO-MAURITANIAN MISSIONS PRESENTLY IN MOTION TO EXPLAIN JOINT APPROACH TOWARD FUTURE OF SAHARA ARE DESCRIBING SPANISH INITIATIVE AS A "DECEPTION" (E.G. DOHA 0834). MOROCCAN POSITION HAS THUS BECOME EVEN MORE NEGATIVE SINCE KING DISCUSSED MATTER WITH ME IN ALREADY WARY TERMS JUNE 25 (RABAT 3092). MY FEELING IS THAT SPANISH QUADRIpartite INITIATIVE HAS BECOME NON-STARTER FOR MOROCCANS, WHO WILL BE MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER TO KEEP ALGERIANS OUT OF NEGOTIATIONS NOW THAT THEY HAVE PINNED THEM DOWN BILATERALLY. IN PRESENT TACTICAL SITUATION, KING WILL NOT BE INCLINED TO
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TAKE A BACKWARD STEP, AS HE SEES IT, TOWARD A FOUR-POWER MEETING. BOTH MAURITANIA AND, I SUSPECT, ALGERIA WOULD NOW STARE THIS VIEW. MAURITANIANS, WE NOTE, ALREADY EXPRESSING NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ON SPANISH INITIATIVE, AND WANT TO BE IN ON ANY DIRECT NEGOTIATION WITH SPAIN (NOUAKCHOTT 1413).

7. IN PRESENT CONTEXT, MOROCCANS NOT LIKELY TO VIEW ANY U.S. SUPPORT FOR SPANISH INITIATIVE (REFTEL B) AS NEUTRAL GESTURE, BUT RATHER AS SHIFT TOWARD PRO-SPANISH ORIENTATION. MOROCCANS WOULD PROBABLY WONDER WHY WE WERE SUDDENLY BACKING SPAIN JUST AS ITS SAHARA POLICY WAS BEING BADLY UNDERMINED BY MOROCCAN SUCCESSES. FROM POINT OF VIEW OF U.S.-MOROCCAN RELATIONS, THEREFORE, IT PREFERABLE TO LET SPANISH UN INITIATIVE TAKE ITS OWN COURSE WITHOUT OUR PARTICIPATION. SYG WALDHEIM'S DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCEED WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE TAKEN ONLY AFTER CUSTOMARY SOUNDINGS WHICH WILL CONFRONT HIM WITH SAME FACTS AS STATED ABOVE.

8. IN SUM, GOS HAS BEEN UNLUCKY--OR SOMETHING-- IN ITS RECENT DIPLOMATIC MOVES RE SAHARA. FIRST SPAIN TRIED TO MANEUVER BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA--THAT ENDED WITH THE TWO TARGETS GETTING TOGETHER. THEN SPANIARDS TRIED

TO PLAY MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA OFF AGAINST ALGIA. ALGERIANS EVIDENTLY ASSESSED SITUATION AND CAME TO CONCLUSION THAT STANDING PAT MIGHT RISK EVERYTHING BUT THAT THIS WAS OPTIMAL TIME MAKE A DEAL WHICH, AMONG OTHER CONCRETE BENEFITS, ALSO PERMITTED REPAIR OF FRAYED ALGERIAN RELATIONS WITH MAURITANIA. IT IS POINTLESS FOR NOT-EXACTLY-DISINTERESTED SPANIARDS OR OTHER OBSERVERS TO SPECULATE THAT THE DEAL IS FRAGILE. NO DOUBT DEEP MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN DIVERGENCIES WILL NOT DISAPPEAR AND TWO SIDES MAY BE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS AGAIN-- BUT IT WILL NO DOUBT BE ON SOME OTHER ISSUE. ALL INDICATIONS FOR PRESENT ARE THAT ALGERIANS HAVE DECIDED WHERE THEIR BEST INTERESTS LIE. MOROVER, ALGERIANS PRESUMABLY UNDERSTAND TERRIFIC ARAB PRESSURE TO WHICH THEY WOULD BE SUBJECTED IF THEY ENTERED OUTRIGHT WAR WITH MOROCCO. AS MOROCCO IS A CLAIMANT AND ALGERIA IS NOT, ARAB PRESSURE WOULD REST ON ALGERIA, WHICH HAS OTHER INTERESTS AND WOULD NOT FIND, IN MY VIEW, SUCH A SITUATION HELPFUL TO FURTHERING ITS OVERALL CONCEPTION OF ITS ROLE IN THE ARAB WORLD. NOR IS "THREAT" OF SERIOUS OPPOSITION BY F POLISARIO OR OTHER MOVEMENTS AGAINST
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THE MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN DEAL TO BE TAKEN OVERLY SERIOUSLY, IN MY VIEW. QUESTION THEN BECOMES ONE OF DEALING WITH DOMESTIC UNREST, IN WHICH MOROCCANS, UNDER COL. DLIMI, HAVE WELL DEMONSTRATED CAPABILITIES. MOREOVER, KING HASSAN'S REMARK JULY 10 (RABAT 3360) GIVES ME THE IDEA THAT THE PROCESS OF BUYING F POLISARIO HAS ALREADY STARTED.

9. RECOMMENDATION: IN LIGHT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, I WOULD JUDGE THAT TIME HAS COME FOR U.S. POLICY DECISION AS TO WHETHER OUR INTERESTS WOULD NOW BE BETTER SERVED BY SHIFT FROM "NEUTRALITY" TO MORE ACTIVE U.S. DIPLOMATIC ROLE. SAHARA PROBLEM IS IN FACT IN PROCESS OF RESOLVING ITSELF AND CONTINUED U.S. INACTION LIKELY TO ENTAIL BENEFITS LOST ON BOTH SIDES. FURTHERMORE, SPANISH SEEM TO BE IN A TIGHT SPOT AND NEED OUR HELP. WE COULD, I WOULD THINK, RENDER USEFUL SERVICE TO SPAIN BY HELPING TO EASE MADRID OUT OF ITS CURRENT ISOLATION AND BY FOSTERING PRESERVATION OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO. SPANISH PRIDE IS UNDOUBTEDLY AN IMPORTANT FACTOR. EMBASSY MADRID IS OF COURSE IN BEST POSITION TO ASSESS THIS, BUT FROM HERE (AND ARAB PRIDE IS NOT THAT DIFFERENT), IT WOULD APPEAR TO US THAT SPANISH SENSITIVITY COULD BE SOFTENED BY NEGOTIATIONS COMMENCING THROUGH AN INTERMEDIARY. SPANIARDS COULD THUS "RESPOND TO OUR URGING" RATHER THAN TAKING THE BITTER STEP THEMSELVES.

10. I CANNOT BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THIS APPROACH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE IN RABAT, AS WE HAVE OF COURSE NOT PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED SUCH A POSSIBILITY WITH GOM. INASMUCH AS KING HAS TWICE APPEALED TO FRENCH AND U.S. GOVERNMENTS TO HELP BRING SPAIN AROUND, HOWEVER, KING MIGHT WELL AGREE. AS FOR EXCLUDING ALGERIA FROM OUR DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES, WE NEED

NOT FRET OVER DURABILITY OF MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RAPPROCHEMENT
BUT CAN TAKE GOM AND GOA AT THEIR PUBLIC WORD. WE CAN ALSO
LET MOROCCANS CARRY THE BALL WITH MAURITANIANS IN FRAMEWORK
OF THEIR JOINT UNDERSTANDING.

11. BEST MOROCCAN-SPANISH ARRANGEMENT COULD CLEARLY BE OBTAINED
NOW RATHER THAN LATER, AND THERE IS NOT MUCH MORE TIME FOR US
TO MAKE OUR PRESENCE FELT IN CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER. ALSO, A
SUDDEN MISSTEP BY EITHER SIDE COULD UNDERMINE NEGOTIATING
PROSPECTS, A DANGER WHICH CAN ONLY INCREASE AS SITUATION
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DRAGS ON.

12. I SEE A U.S. DIPLOMATIC MOVE AS GO-BETWEEN ALONG ABOVE LINES
AS PREFERAXLY, AN INITIAL STEP WHEREBY WE COULD FURNISH MODERATING
ADVICE AGAINST EXCESSIVE DEMANDS FROM EITHER SIDE. IT COULD BE
CARRIED OUT IN QUIET, DISCREET MANNER THROUGH NORMAL
DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. HOPEFULLY, WE COULD WITHDRAW FROM
PROCEEDINGS ONCE THE TWO SIDES, WHICH ARE IN ANY CASE
IN STEADY CONTACT, WERE WELL ON THEIR WAY. AS DANGERS
ALWAYS LURK AGAINST MEDIATORS, IT WOULD BE BEST TO WITHDRAW
AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, BUT THIS ASPECT WOULD HAVE TO BE ASSESSED
WITH UNFOLDING OF PROCESS. IT WORTH STRESSING WE WOULD NOT BE
DEALING WITH OUT-AND-OUT ANTAGONISTS -- RATHER WITH TWO
PARTIES SHARING MUCH COMMON GROUND BUT WHICH ARE EVIDENTLY
IN IMPASSE THEY DO NOT SEEM TO BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THEMSELVES.
AS FRENCH HAVE ALSO BEEN ASKED TO HELP BY KING, CONSULTATIONS
WITH PARIS WOULD SEEM IN ORDER, ALTHOUGH, AS FRANCE HAS
OTHER PROBLEMS WITH SPAIN, PARIS MIGHT WELL PREFER TO LET
US CARRY PRIMARY BURDEN.

13. I AM NOT SUGGESTING HIGH-LEVEL SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY,
BECAUSE QUITE APART FROM FACT THAT SECRETARY AND HIS CLOSEST
ASSOCIATES HAVE OTHER MATTERS ON FRONT BURNER, SAHARA CONFLICT
DOES NOT MERIT, IN MY OPINION, ESCALATION TO SUCH A LEVEL.
IF USG DECIDES ON MORE ACTIVE ROLE, START COULD BE MADE
WITH NORMAL WASHINGTON AND EMBASSY-TO-EMBASSY
COMMUNICATIONS, WHICH SEEM ENTIRELY EQUAL TO THE TASK AND
HAVE ADDED ADVANTAGE OF DISCRETION. IF PERSONAL TRAVEL
SEEMED DESIRABLE, DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN U.S. MILITARY
STATIONS AT KENITRA AND TORREJON COULD FACILITATE IT AND ADD
TO THE DISCRETION.
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